

THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

10 March 1977

National Intelligence Officers

TO: DCI
FROM: NIO/China

1. Attached is a translation of an article published in China (Peking) dealing with a statement by General George Keegan, former Chief of Air Force Intelligence. The Chinese are sympathetic to Keegan's harsh interpretation of Soviet objectives and this is their way of expressing approval.

2. The Chinese have on occasion referred to U.S. intelligence estimates of the Soviet Union and have supported those which attribute to the Soviets the most hostile intentions.

[redacted] In a meeting with the Chinese on 15 February I suggested we could exchange views on the problem of the Soviet Union. To date, the Chinese have not responded.

3. The NSC and State have been informed of our conversations with the Chinese on this subject.

[redacted]
National Intelligence Officer
for China

Attachment:
Translation

STATINTL

FORMER USAF OFFICER WARNS OF SOVIET WAR THREAT

Peking NCNA Domestic Service in Chinese 1642 GMT 27 Feb 77 OW

[Text] Peking, 27 February--DIE WELT of West Germany recently published a talk by General George Keegan, Jr., former assistant chief of staff of intelligence of the U.S. Air Force, to the paper's correspondent in Washington. In the talk, General Keegan pointed out that, as a result of its frenzied expansion of nuclear and conventional military strength, the Soviet Union is threatening the West, including the United States, and that Moscow might unleash a global war.

Keegan said: "The situation now facing the West and the United States reminds me of the situation of the United States and France in 1935...when there were obvious signs to indicate what Hitler was doing. There were obvious signs to indicate that he was considering a certain type of war."

Keegan said: "This situation also applies to the United States today. I know I have upset many people. Since World War II, \$50 to \$75 billion (U.S.) have been spent on this purpose--the building of a gigantic intelligence organ to guard against another Pearl Harbor-type surprise attack on us. However, our situation today is not any better than the situation before the Pearl Harbor incident.

"This is because, for cultural and psychological reasons, we refuse to listen to warnings. We believe that a nuclear war is impossible and therefore we cannot see the signals and indications. But we can find such indications in Soviet documents, books and statements, which are available to everybody."

Touching on the subject of the balance of strength between the United States and the Soviet Union, Keegan said that the "chiefs of staff of the U.S. Armed Forces maintained that the issue of Soviet superiority would only exist sometime in the future. But the intelligence that we have seen and analyzed makes us believe that the Soviets now have the capability to launch the first nuclear attack."

Keegan said: "The Soviets have expanded their strategic and conventional military strength at the expense of raising the living standard of their people. Generally speaking, the power of the Soviet combat forces is stronger than that of the armed forces of the free world, and it is particularly stronger than that of the United States."

Keegan said: "As the trend of the current development indicates, our strength is diminishing in comparison with that of the Soviet Union. The Soviets are increasingly militant and uncompromising. We will encounter a new series of Angolan incidents....

"If the Soviet thrust reaches the point of endangering the passage to Europe or Japan of oil from the Near East, then the United States would realize that its vital interests are threatened. But by that time we will find ourselves in such a situation that the Soviets will yell at us: 'Any intervention signifies the greatest danger!'"

Keegan emphatically pointed out: "In my view, we must resort to all measures to further develop our weapons technology so as to maintain a stable superiority in this respect. But I feel what is most dangerous is our psychological condition, which can probably be overcome by making public the information held by intelligence organs and by mercilessly letting the public face up to this information so that it will exercise its influence on government--the American Government and the governments of other Western countries--and make them stop the development of the current situation."